(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether Government also propose to extend subsidy scheme to this sector; and

(d) what is the position of these items in export sector?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI E.V.K.S. ELANGOVAN): (a) and (b) The Government is considering a relief package for cofffee sector to solve the credit related problems of the coffee industry. Tea Board has proposed a programme for replantation and rejuvenation of the old tea bushes in various tea gardens across the country.

(c) Yes, Sir. Both Tea and Coffee Boards extend subsidies to the tea and coffee industry under their ongoing 10th Plan schemes for various activities. The subsidy extended by the Tea Board to the tea industry covers activities like replanting, rejuvenation, pruning, creation of irrigation facilities, modernization of the processing factories, etc. Coffee Board is extending financial assistance in the form of subsidy to the coffee industry to improve productivity through replanting, water augmentation, quality upgradation, pollution abatement, etc.

(d) Details of exports of tea and coffee during the last few years are as follows:—

Year	Tea (Quantity in million kg)	Coffee (Quantity in Metric tonnes)
2001-2002	190.00	213585
2002-2003	184.40	207333
2003-2004	183.07	232684
2004-2005*	86.97 (April-September 2004)	136189 (as on 25.11.2004)

*Estimated.

Setting up of leather desk

312. SHRI RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD:
SHRI B.J. PANDA:

Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government have set up a leather desk, primarily to attract Italian investment in leather goods etc;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) to what extent this would help to increase trade with Italy?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI E.V.K.S. ELANGOVAN): (a) and (b) The Government has approved a proposal to set up an Indian Leather Desk in Milan (Italy), initially for a period of one year under the Market Access Initiatives (MAI) Scheme. Government assistance for the Desk will be limited to 50% of the expenditure. The main objective of the Desk would be to foster and strengthen mutually beneficial relationship between the leather industry of India and Italy so as to promote trade and investment.

(c) It is targeted that India's leather and leather goods export to Italy will increase from US$ 263 million to US$ 630 million by 2010 with a Compounded Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) of 16%. The Desk will also facilitate Italian investment in Indian Leather Sector, technology transfer and market tie-ups.

Import of pepper from Sri Lanka

313. SHRI K. CHANDRAN PILLAI:
SHRI A. VIJAYARAGHAVAN:

Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a steep increase has been registered in import of pepper from Sri Lanka since the exemption of Import Duty on pepper imported from Sri Lanka;

(b) if so, the details of the import of pepper from Sri Lanka during the period 2001-04, year-wise;

(c) whether Government are aware of the fall in prices of pepper in consecutive years;

(d) if so, the details thereof, year-wise; and

(e) the steps Government have taken/propose to take to protect interest of the indigenous producers?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI E.V.K.S. ELANGOVAN): (a) Yes, Sir. Import of pepper from Sri Lanka has registered a steep increase after effecting exemption of duty in import of pepper from Sri Lanka under the India-Sri Lanka Free Trade Agreement.